



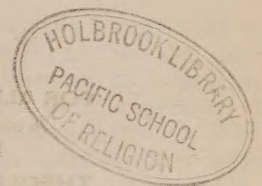
# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● FEBRUARY 1979

## CONTENTS

	Page
'Living Now and Living New' .. .. .	1
Visit to the Presbyterian Church of Burma .. .. .	2
Biblical Basis for Church's Concern for the Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin .. .. .	4
The Church and Economic Justice .. .. .	6
Render Unto Caesar ! .. .. .	7
News from the Dioceses .. .. .	10
Book Review .. .. .	11
Notices .. .. .	12



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# 'Living Now and Living New'



The Seventeenth Session of the Madras Diocesan Council was held at Kancheepuram from 14th to 17th January, 1979. It was good and meaningful that it was held at Kancheepuram for it reminded the delegates, as Bishop Sundar Clarke put it, that 'Madras Diocese is both urban and rural, is both rich and poor, is both educated and uneducated, is industrial as well as rural. It is good for us city dwellers to get away from our city life and see rural life and also to share in the life of the rural church, as much as it is good for the rural people to share in the life of the city church.'

The theme of the council 'Living Now and Living New' was thoughtfully chosen for it provided scope to the delegates to review the life and work of the Diocese in the past and at present and project direction for the future course of action. It was also significant and relevant that the theme was related to the Church of South India, both in the Bible Studies and in the main addresses. The Presidential Address delivered at the beginning of the Session by Bishop Sundar Clarke brought out vividly the strengths and weaknesses of the Diocese as well as the Church of South India and also gave a clarion call to the delegates to revitalise the ministry of the Diocese and work for its renewal as a 'Caring, Sharing and Daring Diocese.' The following excerpts from the Bishop's Address should help us all to examine our life and work and dedicate ourselves to make the Church of South India the true Body of Christ free from all corrupting influences and forces and willing to be a servant of God and Society.

'At our last Synod held last year at Kottayam we celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Church of South India which was in September 1977. As this is the first Council after the last C. S. I. Synod we are celebrating the 30th Anniversary and also the thinking of the Synod.

God has led us so wonderfully that "Living now" enables us to reflect upon the 30 years of our glorious pilgrimage. It has been a pilgrimage of love, unity, togetherness in the Diocese of Madras. Perhaps we have a very well balanced representation of the former denominations and "Living Now" enables us to see the wonderful net work that has been produced through the fabric and the matrix of Christian unity. We have grown wonderfully with peace, love and concord to be one family in the Diocese of Madras and it is no exaggeration to say that Church unity has blossomed in the Church of South India, has blossomed in the Diocese of Madras. This is evidently the fruit of the Spirit and we thank God for this wonderful united family.

The Church of South India is being looked upon as a model of church unity all the world over and we

need to give God all the glory as we do not deserve any glory. For the first time in the history of the Christian church the episcopal and non-episcopal traditions have been knit together and that too most blessedly and successfully.

"Living New" takes us back to larger unity for larger ministries and larger witness. I am sure you are aware that a Joint Council has been formed between the Church of South India, the Church of North India and the Marthoma Churches. It is our earnest hope and prayer that this joint Council will lead eventually to one united church in India. That day does not seem too far away and one needs to look towards that day with eagerness and with prayer.

This larger unity should necessarily bring about more dedication to serve the Lord not only in the oneness of the spirit but also in the oneness of organization and work. There is a lot to be done together. This will naturally lead to more effective witness. We are striving towards larger unity, for more effective witness. May the Lord in his own time bring us together, so that together we will strive to bring India to the feet of Christ. Perhaps the theme "Living Now and Living New" takes us back to the old motto of William Carey which should be ours today—"Expect great things from God—Attempt great things for God".

While further thinking about our Council theme I would like to highlight some of the problems that we face in the Church and even in our Diocese today related to "Living Now and Living New". There seems to be two great evils in our "Living Now and Living New". One is the desire for power and the other the rat-race for materialism.

The desire for power is rapidly increasing in the life of the Church. Everybody wants to be something or someone in the Church. We are losing the spirit of simplicity, humility and "un-knowness". Many of our laymen and women want to be seen, want to be heard and want to be felt. Their name matters much, their prestige matters much. They want to dominate, they want to make their way into pastorate committees, area committees and diocesan committees. This is certainly not the spirit of Christ. Christ never wanted position and power. As for our Presbyters in the Church, they are neither free from it. There is canvassing and politicking for posts. Many of us want to be leaders of prominence. This again is far from the spirit of Christ. Tragedy has befallen us and we have



become feeble victims to the desire for power. The desire for power has led to canvassing, electioneering and manipulating. It is my earnest hope and prayer that the good Lord will deliver us from these evils. It has been, is, and ever shall be my prayer that God should deliver the Diocese of Madras from power politics. I have constantly pleaded with the clergy to abstain from canvassing, politiking and electioneering. I would like to make an earnest plea to everybody in this Diocesan Council to abstain from canvassing, politiking and electioneering. We are called to be men and women of God. We are called to serve Him in humility and simplicity and not in power and pomp. Whether we hold offices or not we can serve God, whether we are on committees or not we can serve God. "Living Now and Living New" reminds us that the danger in "Living Now" is filled with the environment of power. We need to

be stripped of all power and authority and we are called to be servants of the servant Lord. To "Living New" we must be nothing and God must be everything.

Another corrupting force in the Church today is the desire for money. We sometimes come across financial irregularities at all levels of the Church. "Living Now" should awaken us to the danger of setting our minds on money and "Living New" must drive us to search after spiritual values rather than material values. The Church today needs to be renewed and purged of all its dross and must become more and more the sanctified body of Christ. May God help us to dedicate ourselves in this diocese to realise the dangers we are in ("Living Now") and to offer ourselves afresh to be mobile temples of the Holy Spirit ("Living New").

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## *Visit to the Presbyterian Church of Burma*

On behalf of the Council for World Mission, London, Rev. Bernard Thorogood, General Secretary, CWM, and I went to have a one week visit to the Presbyterian Church of Burma from the 28th November to 4th December, 1978. Though the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church is on the Chin Hills on the west of Burma, nearer to India, we were not allowed to go to places like Kalembo, Tahan and Falam where their headquarters are. The congregations which we were able to visit were at Rangoon, Mandalay and Maymyo. The last one being a hill station, it gave us a glimpse of the lives of Christians of the Chin Hills.

But nothing kept the congregations from the Chin Hills to step down to Maymyo. The Bible studies which Bernard took were attended to by a large group of both men and women and the participation, in spite of the lack of fluency in English, was remarkable. We were amazed at the strong faith they have and in spite of difficulties they have disciplined themselves as a pioneer church. Most of the people do not know English; neither is their education very high; nor do they have a special theological seminary to train their presbyters. The congregations are poor.

The Presbyterian Church has its origin in North East India. Christianity came to the Chin Hills through boxes of gifts, sent by the North East India Christians, which contained Bibles, tracts, Gospel passages and a few clothes. They have never had any service from the Church missionaries and they have lived in an imposed isolation for most of their lives. Therefore it was very interesting to see this church in action.

The Presbyterian Church does not have much property or churches made of stone or brick. Even at Rangoon the Presbyterian Church does not have a church building

to worship. The Lutheran Mission Church, with an Indian congregation under the Rev. J. J. Andrews, has given much hospitality to the P.C.B. members in Rangoon. The Lutheran Hall is made available on Sunday from noon to 3-30 p.m. for worship. The P.C.B. does not have even a single car. Its full-time workers are poorly paid and there is no endowment fund to draw on. When we see how churches in India are burned and entangled with large institutions, we see freedom here. There may be a case for some outside help to provide a few pieces of equipment, but we hope the church in Burma will refuse to give up its simple life-style.

The church is basically for the Chin people. Conscious of their language and culture the Chins may sometimes feel towards the Burmese rather as the Welsh feel towards the English. We understood that in all the schools run by Government the Chin language is taught only for the first four primary years and then it is dropped completely and Burmese takes over completely. Therefore many Chin people are unable to read and write their own language properly. The church has responded by opening its own classes during the school vacation solely for the teaching of Chin language. So a witness is given here to the care of people in their own cultures. We also understood that there are five main dialects of the Chin language which makes problem of teaching or publishing difficult.

It is refreshing to hear the mother church, the Presbyterian Church of North-east India mentioned with so much love. But there was no mother-daughter relationship because the Presbyterian Church in Burma did not depend on either money grants or a stream of missionaries. Though the church in Burma has kept the Presbyterian form of organization, it is very different



from the Presbyterian Church in Singapore. There are few qualified ministers, and lay people carry by for the larger part of the daily activity of the church. The strength is in the response created by these people with great self-sacrifice and this gives much vigour to church life. But the weakness lies in the lack of qualified teaching for new or young Christians. The church leaders are preparing a mobile team of lay training who will move from village to village giving instruction in hygiene, literacy, weaving, etc., as well as Bible studies and churchmanship. Rev. Bawla is a real leader who is turning six students for the ministry at Tahan.

Unlike so many of the churches born out of the missionary movement, the Presbyterian Church in Burma had never been dependent on foreign funds. So from the start the people have known that they have to provide the basic elements of their church life. They do this with offerings of their work, of rice and of money. It seems to us that the spirit of giving is very strong. There was unstinted giving to guests which humbled us. At the same time the church is prepared to receive help for particular aspect which is needed and printing equipment is a recent example. But we understand that even this printing unit is not a complete one.

The church is very much awakened to the missionary calling, though it forms the minority section of the nation. Buddhism is omnipresent and very powerful. There may be a future for the Presbyterian Church, when active missionary witness is likely to be among the tribal people as there is no strong social antipathy to Christian faith. The Church is growing in the Chin Hills and a new presbytery in the Kabaw Valley area is started. They are considering an outreach programme to the Kabaw people and a young man is being prepared for this venture. This is a very significant step in the life of the church, because it would be a movement out of the Chin tribal culture, into a new language backed by the slenderest of material resources.

The church shares in the ecumenical life of Burma. The Presbyterian Church is a generous contributor to the Burma Council of Churches and tries to share in its programmes. Then we met the Officers of Burma Christian Council they had words of appreciation about the strength of spirit which the Presbyterians bring to their work. The President of the Burma Council of Churches spoke highly of the spirit of self-support of the Presbyterian Church.

The Burma Council of Churches gave us a welcome dinner. The quality of the leadership of the B.C.C. is impressive and their activities considerable. They told us that their experience of the enforced moratorium had been very salutary, though they had losses. They have gained greatly in the range of responsibilities handled by nationals and the growth in wisdom which this brought. But they told us that they have lost in the quality and the spirit of theological training and by the feeling of isolation they have endured. There is rejoicing that after 15 years of total prohibition of overseas travel, the General Secretary of the Council was allowed to go to Singapore to a CCA meeting in October, 1978 and he hoped to attend the WCC Central Committee meetings in Jamaica in December.

The dominating influence in the country appear to be isolationism and Buddhism. The military government have kept tightly closed borders for many years with a very small flow of international trade. Therefore their economic life had stagnated. Isolation also means a very restricted flow of information. The major international contacts were with the Communist countries of Asia. Perhaps this deliberate policy of isolation was followed to create national unity in the country of several tribes. In the Rangoon Congregation of the P.C.B. there is a Lieut. Colonel, a Lushai, a convinced Christian. In the Council of State there are 3 Christians. This is very interesting in spite of the fact that Buddhism is dominant.

Rangoon, Mandalay and Maymyo with enormous commercial and Government buildings are grand reminders of British colonialism. But most of these are decaying. While you are in Burma you have a feeling that life does not contain much revolutionary spirit as one will expect with a Government with socialist or Communist philosophy. But you can feel that there is a great awakening in the churches in Burma. I visited the Tamil congregation which is a very small Anglican group trying their best to survive. Most of the members who were in the church have gone back to India and there are only 24 families who are heroically keeping up the traditional worship in their old church. The Baptists, Methodists and the Lutherans seem to be more flourishing. When you are among these Christians, you can see the contemporary power of the Gospel.

MRS. D. L. GOPAL RATNAM,  
*Hony. General Secretary, CSI  
and Chairman, CWM.*

25th January 1979.



# *Biblical Basis for Church's Concern for the Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin*

## **1. Introduction :**

Following the publication of the Message to the Churches and the Statement of the National Convention on the Plight of the Christians of Scheduled castes Origin that met at Bangalore in June 1978, there is considerable debate and discussion on the issues involved in our Churches. Some specific questions are raised. Why should the Church talk of 'Scheduled Caste' Christians? Why should we be concerned only about this group within the Church? Are we not being communal and even perpetuating Casteism in the Church when we talk of Scheduled Caste Christians? Do we have any Biblical basis for Church's special concern for this section of our fellow-believers? Here an attempt is made to answer such questions.

## **2. The Situation :**

The National convention sponsored by the NCCI and the Catholic Bishops Conference of India when over 200 representatives, most of the Churches around India gathered for the first time in history of the Indian Church, it has revealed quite a lot about the plight of Christians of Scheduled Castes Origin (CSCO).

Thus, it came out that of the 16 million Christians in India today more than 10 million belonged to the CSCO. Such a vast majority of people belonging to one of India's Minority communities are openly and unjustly discriminated against by our secular democratic Government on the basis of religion. The Constitutionally provided privileges and compensatory benefits to the socially and economically oppressed sections of India's populations called 'the Scheduled Castes' are denied to them if they belong to Christianity. A constitutional order of the President of India in 1950, confined these benefits and concessions only to those Scheduled Castes belonging to Hindu religion and (from 1956) to Sikh religion. This blatant religious discrimination is nothing but deliberate denial of justice to over 10 million Indian Citizens. The argument that Christianity does not recognise caste divisions and so the CSCO are not eligible, cannot hold water because these same privileges and benefits are given to the Scheduled castes people within Sikhism, which religion also does not recognise caste divisions. Further in granting these same priveleges and concessions to the Scheduled Tribes, no discrimination is made based on religion.

The fact is that, whatever their religious affiliations, all the peoples of the 40 odd Scheduled castes listed in the Constitution of India continue to suffer in equal

measure, all the evil consequences of centuries-old oppressive caste-structures in the Indian Society. Irrespective of the present religious affiliations, the forebears of all these Scheduled castes suffered for over 4000 years, generation after generation, as outcastes and untouchables, deprived and depraved. Neither their conversion to Buddhism or Islam or Christinity, etc. nor 30 years of political independence brought any substantial change in their Social or Economic status. On the other hand, the erstwhile slave and servant class now described and even, branded as Harijans who number about 120 millions among the 630 million Indians today have become poorer, except in the case of a very small number and continue to be oppressed and discriminated against in spite of the Constitutionally provided handicap benefits for their progress.

And the 10 million Christians of Scheduled castes origin suffer a double injustice. The Government discriminates against them because they are Christians and not Hindus. And Ironically and sadly even their fellow-Christians discriminate against the CSCO, subtly and surreptitiously observing Caste-distinctions. The Church, during the course of over 300 years of missionary enterprise in India, gained most of its converts from the Scheduled castes. However, only a handful of leaders could emerge from them despite the Church's vast machinery for education and health and other service programmes. Thus, deprived of help from the Government as well as from the Church they are victims of double injustice and oppression.

## **3. Biblical Teaching :**

Such discrimination and injustice was not unfamiliar in the early Church of the New Testament times. In the Book of Acts we read of injustice done to poor widows and others among Greek speaking Christians, by the Jewish Hebrew speaking Christians, at Jerusalem. Even St. Peter was not free from communal discrimination until this was exposed as a serious sin by the Holy Spirit through a vision (Acts : 10). In fact it took the Apostle St. Paul to rebuke and correct the Apostle Peter on this matter (Gal. 1 10). It was really hang-over of the Jewish sin of exclusivism and communalism. Our Lord Jesus Christ during this earthly ministry had promptly exposed and squarely condemned this as a cardinal sin. He always took the side of the victims of discrimination and injustice. His charter of mission included liberation of all kinds of the oppressed (Luke 4 : 18-21). He was the friend of the poor, the sinners and publicans, like Mary Magdalene and Zacheus, but he also clearly identified the Samaritans as one



community, discriminated and suppressed by the Jews. We know that in the time of Jesus, the Jews claiming to be a superior race and a higher caste, treated the Samaritans as untouchables and outcasts. There was no inter-marriage nor even eating or drinking with them at their homes. In fact, a Jew from Judea would rather travel many more miles, cross the river Jordan twice, than pass through the neighbouring district of Samaria, before entering the other Jewish territory of Galilee beyond Samaria. Seeing such sinful behaviour and attitude on the part of his fellow Jews, Jesus Christ promptly protested and exposed this wickedness. He would deliberately go through Samaria often (Luke 9:52) while going to Judea from Galilee. He would take all opportunity to contact and to approach them (John: 4) He would challenge popular Jewish belief that Samaritans are 'thankless' or 'Religionless' and even 'immoral and selfish'. Of the 10 lepers healed by him, the only one that returned to give thanks was a Samaritan, Jesus would point out. The Samaritan harlot woman of Sychar, Jesus would show, was a more genuinely religious and successful evangelist than His own disciples and Jewish pharisees, (John 4). As the hero of his most famous parable on 'true religion' and 'love for neighbour' Jesus would deliberately think only of a Samaritan and even contrast him against the proud Jewish priest, and Levite. On another occasion (Luke 9:52), Jesus rebuked his disciples who desired even to burn down a Samaritan Village. Surely Jesus took the side of the oppressed Samaritans and exposed the oppressors among the Jews. It was through such personal example and precept Jesus Christ sought to expose and change the attitude and behaviour of discrimination among his fellow Jews including his disciples. Indeed, Jesus identified the Samaritans as a community that is discriminated and oppressed and sought to liberate them. And, will not the Indian Church identify these CSCOs as one of the communities oppressed and discriminated and humbly and urgently seek to liberate them?

Sent by the God of the Bible who heard the cry of the oppressed Six lakhs of Isrealites, Moses and Aaron went to the political rulers of Egypt to liberate them all. Will the Indian Church also awaken to the cry of 10 million CSCOs and secure justice from the political authorities of our central Government?

#### 4. What the Church of South India can do

The Church of South India has an urgent task to do in this regard. If the CSCOs suffer a double injustice, by all means the CSI must seek to secure the justice, and thus fulfil Christ's mission. It is estimated that over two-thirds of the 18 lakh Christians in the CSI are of the CSCOs. Does not St. Paul admonish that we must do good to all, but especially to those of the

household of faith (Galatians 6:10). Also did not our Lord Himself commend the steward of the household that had given good care for those within the household (Luke 12:42)? Again St. Paul did not think it communal mindedness when he raised funds and support from Macedonia and Achaia for the poor people within the Christian community at Jerusalem. Therefore the concern for the weaker and neglected sections within the church cannot be construed as being communal or Selfish. Rather, the Church has a duty to discern and identify those sections within its fold, who are victims of injustice and discrimination. The early church, thus identified the neglected Greek speaking poor Christians at Jerusalem and promptly proceeded to set up a new order of ministry, the order of deacons, to serve this particular section of Christians, in their special need. (see Acts 6). Will the CSI also, have the wisdom and the vision even at the Synod level to create a new machinery or department to handle this special ministry to CSCOs? It may be recalled that some years ago there was an exodus from the Madhya Kerala Diocese of several thousand Christians of Scheduled Castes origin in protest against their being discriminated and neglected. Following such a crisis that Diocese has set up a special department to care for their uplift. But surely, the synod need not wait for any such crisis. Nor can the synod leave it for Diocesan level action only. Certainly each Diocese will have to plan and institute programmes of liberating the CSCOs among them as the Diocese of Madras has recently begun to do. But the Synod must give the lead in such ministry.

At the Diocesan level, the special directorates or departments for ministering to the CSCOs, can set up special Scholarships, create job opportunities as well as initiate conscientising and leadership training programmes for the least and the poorest sections within the CSCOs.

At the Synod level, perhaps this ministry can be more comprehensive possibly, functioning as a *Social Justice cell* that would survey, study and fight for securing justice not only for the CSCOs, but even for all the Scheduled castes that are oppressed and discriminated in our part of the country. But more immediately and more urgently, in the present context, the Synod can join hands with rest of the Church in India to get the Indian Parliament amend the Presidential order of 1950 to include the CSCOs for the constitutional benefits and privileges. Further, the Church of South India Synod may also set up a *Vigilance Squad* to spot out and identify cases of injustice and discrimination and to help secure justice for the victims of oppression both within and outside the Church. May the Church of South India continue to be faithful to involve herself in relevant ministries and thus fulfil the mission of Christ in South India.

The Rev. M. AZARIAH,  
Secretary,  
Bible Society of India,  
Madras-3.



# The Church and Economic Justice

Foreign Missionaries who came to India were deeply moved by the grinding poverty they found everywhere, side by side with ostentatious luxury. The Indian Church therefore accepted it as one of their primary duties to serve the under-privileged sections of Society. Thus schools, hospitals, Orphanages etc., came to be founded throughout the length and breadth of India under Christian auspices. In fact, the Indian Church, though belonging to many different denominations, has contributed more self-giving service to the down-trodden, than any other institution in this Country.

Unfortunately the Church in India failed to probe into the reason for the economic inequalities they found all around, or to condemn the factors responsible for these inequalities. On the other hand, till very recent times, it was the common teaching of the Church that God has ordained the different ranks in wealth and position; that the poor and needy must submit to their 'betters'.

In holding this view the Church in India was, however, only keeping pace with the church universal. For after the first few centuries the organized Church had deviated from the teaching of its founder, and begun exhorting the poor to be contented with their lot in the hope that they would be compensated in a future World. As a matter of fact it was because Roman Catholic Priests spread this teaching among the poor, that Emperor Napoleon decided to establish Roman Catholicism as the State religion in France. Napoleon declared, 'Society cannot exist without inequality of fortune and inequality of fortune without religion. When a man is dying of hunger beside another who is gorging himself, it is impossible for him to approve the difference, unless there is some authority to assure him that it is the will of God'. The organized church gave the assurance.

In doing so, however, the organized church did not reflect the attitude of Christ. Christ came into this world to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and offered the most glorious goal ever offered to humanity: the Kingdom of God on earth—a society ruled by love in all the relationships of life, including the economic and social; a society based on mutual assistance, instead of self-seeking and unbridled competition. Christ also showed his followers where to get the power to achieve that goal. The apostles who carried on Christ's Mission wrote freely about such a social order

to the churches. And as the Acts of the Apostles and the early Christian writings show, the early church made an earnest attempt to achieve this objective.

But after the first few centuries organized Christianity changed its course. From an institution attempting to reconstruct society on the co-operative plan, with mutual service instead of self-seeking as the incentive, the church developed into an institution patronising the exploiters. Christianity thus turned out to be, as the Socialists and the Communists have pointed out, 'an opiate to the people', enabling the oppressed sections to acquiesce in a sense of predestined inferiority. Agricultural Labourers and factory hands exploited by the rich few therefore do not look any longer to the church to save them from exploitation.

In these circumstances critics of Capitalism have put forward two possible substitutes before the public—namely Socialism and Communism.

Under socialism while key industries will be owned and operated by the Government, the ownership and management of considerable sections of the economy will be with co-operative societies and private business, but under necessary regulations. The political changes necessary for transforming the economic system from the capitalistic to the Socialistic form will be made by constitutional methods. And the distribution of income under socialism will be on the basis of a just reward to each person for the amount and quality of his work.

Communism on the other hand aims at establishing a society in which all wealth is owned by the state and all economic activities are planned and controlled by the state. Distribution will be in accordance with the maxim 'from each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs'. The transition from capitalism to communism will be by a violent revolution which will establish the dictatorship of the working class.

The Christian idea of the Kingdom of God is not so precise in detail as the idea of socialism or communism. Because Christ did not prescribe for a particular age, or enunciate a detailed programme for a particular Country. On the other hand he laid down certain broad principles to which any social system must conform, to be just and enduring. With the advance of Civilisation the social system will surely become more complicated. But the principles of love and brotherhood proclaimed by Christ, which alone provide a secure basis for the fabric of society, remain valid yesterday, today and for ever.

In the light of the principles proclaimed by Christ, all the three social systems which draw our attention today—Capitalism, Socialism, and Communism—are found to have their merits as well as their defects. Capitalism, for example, appeals to the instinct of self-preservation, and draws out the maximum effort for production. But without adequate restrictions it leads to cruel disparity in income. Socialism, on the other hand, enunciates a better principle of distribution, but reduces efficiency in management by enforcing state ownership. Among these three social systems, communism offers the loftiest principle of distribution, a principle illustrated by Christ in the parable of the labourers. But at the same time communism denounces belief in God, encourages violence, and repudiates

(continued on page 8)

[FEBRUARY 1979]



# Render Unto Caesar!

By ANAND VEERARAJ

You are right! I am talking about what you call 'the dirty game of politics'. I do not blame you. After all that you are exposed to is the only politics that takes place within the four walls of the Church.

Some of you readers also believe that a Christian should have nothing to do with politics. You say, 'we are strangers and pilgrims in this foreign land'. Well, this sums up the general attitude of the Christian community towards politics.

There are many others who do feel that church participation in the political life of the State is an important social obligation. After all, the members of the Church are bonafide citizens of the State and therefore should exercise their citizenship intelligently in constructive political action programme.

Hitherto, the church was a mere spectator to what was going on in the political arena of the State. This was clearly evident from the fact that by and large the Church was silent during the days of emergency, except for a few who stood on the roof tops and shouted like the morning roosters, with nobody rising up to their call.

The church involvement in politics must also be seen as part of Christian discipleship, witness and responsible use of our God given freedom and stewardship of democratic rights and privileges. This assumption is primarily based on our strong belief of the Lordship of Christ over all things. It must, therefore, become all the more necessary that we as ambassadors of the King of Kings should be interested in politics and involve the whole church in every area of our social life.

Having said this, let me also say that this is not going to be easy. It is not a game of hit-miss and run as you may like to consider. It is a call to costly discipleship. It is a serious business. Secondly we ought to get our motives, goals and priorities in proper perspective before we get into any political action programmes; otherwise the whole attempt will be directed towards selfish or narrow parochial ends.

We ought to consider this need for the church's involvement in politics in the following three dimensions :—

- (a) Individual Christian's response.
- (b) Local Church (Pastorate) response.
- (c) Diocesan/Synod level response.

One has to be judicious in deciding what areas and types of political involvement should be left to indi-

vidual participation. For instance, party politics should be a matter of individual concern. The church should not attempt this. Certain issues if tackled on the Diocesan level would bear more weight and bring about greater influence on the Government. For instance (it is my strong conviction) that the Diocese as a whole should support the present government policy regarding prohibition.

## 1. Individual Christian's response:

By and large the ordinary pew sitter is a political and does not bother about what takes place in the political arena of the State. This is more so in rural congregations. However, there are a few, at least one or two in each pastorate, who are attuned to the political pulse of the State and their neighbourhood. It would be wise on the part of the church to recognise such potential individuals and encourage them to consider their role in politics as a call of God and provide moral support and environment for organizing people for political action programmes.

However, one cannot rule out the possibility of such individuals being invariably committed to party politics or are driven by narrow parochial or vested interests. A few of these are also seasoned politicians :

- (a) The church leaders should be able to recognise such individuals and bring them onto a common action forum or platform or form them into an Advisory Committee to advise the Diocese or local churches on the matters regarding political action.
- (b) Individuals should be encouraged and if necessary to a certain extent backed by the local church and Christian community to stand for elections to public offices in Panchayat, Taluk Boards, Municipal Councils and legislatures and so on.
- (c) All individuals must be encouraged to become at least primary members of a political party of their liking. This itself will be a process of indirect political education.
- (d) The church should encourage all its members to exercise their franchise.

## 2. Local Church response:

I mean a local pastorate when I use this word 'Church' here in this context. One of the biggest hurdles in political action is organizing the mass. Effective participation in any political action programme is not at all possible unless the mass is organised. This is where a local church comes in handy.



Every Parish is an organised body and it is very homogeneous. The strong point of this organisation is that it is voluntarily motivated by common faith and goals. Political sociologists do recognise this fact. They say that no voluntary agency on earth is as cohesive, homogeneous and better motivated and organised than a local church. Therefore the problem of organisation of people does not come in the way when we talk about church and political action. All that we need to do is to give emphasis to political education and action.

- (a) Hence each church should have a programme of political education at pastorate level. This could be best applied through Youth Fellowships, Women's Fellowships and Sunday Schools. CISRS lay training programmes which are held in the evenings should be a source to educate the laity on political action. The whole church should become politically alive in terms of the whole human community and must at all points avoid narrow parochialism.
- (b) Each pastorate could form a vigilance cell with enlightened lay people as members, with one elected to be convener. The functions of this cell should be :
  - (i) identifying critical local socio-economic and political issues and work out a programme of action for the pastorate to be involved to make a positive contribution. For instance let us say the garbage in the neighbourhood has not been cleared for weeks together by the Municipality. Does the church in the vicinity have any concern about this mundane problem ?
  - (ii) Secondly, it should also follow through the programmes and projects of the local bodies and social welfare agencies in the area and its influence to see that the programmes are implemented as planned and promised.
- (c) Divine services should be held on important national holidays.
- (d) Members from the pastorate should be encouraged to take part officially in labour/trade Unions and local Welfare Associations and action forums and if necessary the congregation should exhibit its solidarity openly with people's struggle by joining processions and demonstrations.
- (e) If necessary the pastorates in the area should join together and put up a united front to effectively tackle the local issues.

**3. Diocesan/Synod level response :** At the Diocesan/Synod level, the macro level issues should be tackled.

- (a) The Socio-Economic Concerns Committee should identify areas and issues to which the Diocese/Synod as a whole should respond and draw up programmes to which the whole Diocese/Synod could respond at all levels.
- (b) The Diocesan/Synod representatives should be encouraged to get into the Govt. Minority Cells and Backward Class Commissions and other quasi-government Boards and Bodies to bring about effective influence.

- (c) The concerned committee should make a study of the various recent legislations and governmental orders made both at the Centre and the State regarding social welfare programmes and communicate them to grass-root level and follow it upto see their implementation.
- (d) A few pressing socio-political-economic issues of the State should be brought before the Diocesan Council and resolution should be passed ; such resolutions should be officially communicated to the Government bodies concerned and released to the press.
- (e) The Diocese should nominate a spokesman who would from time to time be able to issue press release, write letters of protests, letters to the editors, organise signature campaigns and be able to hold press conferences to influence public opinion. And, if necessary organise protest march, demonstrations and rallies of some kind or another.
- (f) Diocese should organise political education and leadership seminars from time to time for potential leaders who would work for the larger interests of the society.

I have suggested a number of ways and means for the Church as a whole to be involved in meaningful political action programmes. This is not by any means comprehensive and not all these suggestions will be applicable for all situations. Careful consideration and planning must go into every form of political action.

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#### The Church and . . . .—(Continued from page 6)

certain fundamental rights dear to all mankind. Therefore in the pure and unadulterated form, neither capitalism, nor socialism, nor communism will give permanent satisfaction, or secure a lasting hold on any country.

The Kingdom of God as outlined by Christ forms the only social system which will give humanity enduring peace and contentment. But unfortunately the church has failed to uphold its principles, or exemplify its structure. If there had been a brotherhood within the Indian Church which includes not only the spiritual, but also the social and the economic, by this time the vast majority of people in this country suffering from economic injustice would have streamed into its fold. The idea of brotherhood is, of course, latent within organized Christianity. But in actual realized fact this brotherhood and economic justice still await embodiment. It is for us of the present generation to recapture our master's vision and to beseech him for the spirit which alone will make its realisation possible.

E. J. EDONA



# Worship Programmes in Madras Christian College (Autonomous)

Apart from being a renowned institution academically, M.C.C. has always endeavoured to answer the challenge of its Christian calling in many ways. It portrays the fact that it is a Christian College in its every aspect.

Within the College campus there is a small but beautiful Chapel (the Bishop Heber Chapel) where Holy Communion services are held on Sunday mornings while the main auditorium-Anderson Hall-is used for Sunday Evening Services and morning prayers during the week days. In order to get active participation from different sections of the Campus Community, some good changes have been made in the worship programmes.

One of them is the admission of women students into the Sanctuary Guild in Bishop Heber Chapel. Being one of them, it was to me a tremendous experience as I had the opportunity of serving the Lord directly in His sanctuary. When will the ecclesiastical orders be granted in the country for women, who have the dedication, theological training, and call of God to enter into and serve from the sanctuary of God?

The other important change is that the Student Christian Movement in the College organised a 'BEAT MASS' in the Anderson Hall, which was simply a service in song and music (mostly contemporary). It proved to be a great success and left an indelible impression on many minds. Will the worship services be at least occasionally modified so as to enable the youth to express their aspirations to God and to the congregations?

We thank God for all the help He has rendered M. C. C. this year. We only pray that He will be with her as she scales greater heights for Him.

(SD., IRENE RAJ)  
*Student, M.C.C.*

November 20, 1978.

# Obituary

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## Sister Edith M. Joshua

Sister Edith M. Joshua, Mother of the Bethel Asram, Trichur, passed away on November 9, 1978. Sister Edith was born at Quilon, Kerala, on July 17, 1917. After taking M.A. and M.Ed. Degrees from the Presidency College, and Meston Training College, she worked as a teacher in Lady Irwin School, Delhi, and later as Principal of Irshivalley Public School, Madanapalle. She resigned this job and joined the Bethel Asram as a Full-time worker in 1965. She joined the C.S.I. Sisterhood in 1973 and was in-charge of the Old People's Home, English Medium School, KNH Home and Parish School at Trichur. She was the moving force behind the starting of the C.S.I. Technical School for women at Trichur and worked as Principal of the School. She was a tireless worker and was responsible for the progress of the Bethel Asram and all the institutions connected with it. The funeral was conducted in the All Saints' Church, Trichur, on November 10th.

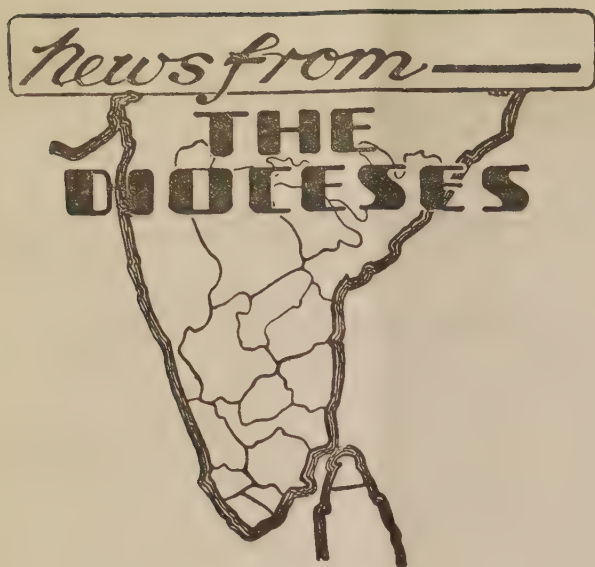
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## Workers' Conference

A Conference and Retreat were held for the workers of the Diocese at the C.S.I. Retreat Centre, Shoranur on December 5th to 8th, 1978. 50 workers from all over the Diocese attended the Retreat. The Rev. Fr. M. C. George, The Rev. K. G. Koshy and the Diocesan Bishop were the main leaders.

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## THE DIOCESE OF KARIMNAGAR

A Retreat for the clergy and senior workers in the Warangal Group Church Council was conducted by the Rt. Rev. P. Solomon, Bishop in Dornakal and Moderator's Commissary in the Diocese of Karimnagar at Mulug from the 13th to 15th of November 1978. The Rev. P. O. Ninan (the Diocesan Secretary), and the Rev. B. Prabhudass (the Group Chairman) assisted the Bishop in the Retreat. In the midst of busy pastoral work, those who attended the Retreat found it very useful and uplifting.

The visit of the Rt. Rev. T. S. Joseph, Bishop in Madhya Kerala Diocese together with the Very Rev. A. Joseph Mathew (Diocesan Treasurer, M.K.D.), the Rev. K.P. Philip (Secretary for the Board of Mission, Kodukulanji), the Rev. P.O. Varghese (Secretary for the Home Mission Board, Nedungadapally) and Mr. V. C. Varghese, Kodukulanji from the Madhya Kerala Diocese from the 16th to the 19th of November was a great blessing to the Christians and Church Workers in the Parkal Mission Field of the Madhya Kerala Diocese. This visit and the visit of the Rt. Rev. P. Solomon, Moderator's Commissary consisted of a variety of activities and engagements. These were hectic days with work, services and travels in the entire Mission Field.

On the 16th the Moderator's Commissary chaired the High School Management Committee convened by the Rev. Kuruvilla George at Parkal and had closer fellowship with the staff members. On the 17th he conducted the Holy Eucharist and preached in the morning. The Parkal Mission Annual Committee was also chaired by the Commissary and the members including all the Missionaries, the delegates from the M. K. Diocese and other representatives had the opportunity of hearing the reports of the Missionary Work done in the Parkal, Mogallapalli and Jangedu areas of the Field. It was a joy to find how God has been doing His work through His servants in the Evangelistic, Educational, Medical and Social service fields. In the

evening the newly built Crèche Building was dedicated by the Bishop Joseph and opened by the Bishop Solomon followed by a reception. In spite an inevitable engagement awaiting at Karimnagar, Bishop Solomon graciously accepted a Farewell presented to him by the area representatives over which Bishop Joseph presided. The Revds. K. P. Philip and K. J. Samuel of Jangedu voiced the sentiments of the people of the Parkal Mission and Bishop Solomon responded in his characteristic humility. There was a dinner arranged at 8.00 p.m. at which the Members of the Mission and Hostel united. After dinner, the field workers had a meeting with the delegates from Kerala at which the Bishops, the Revds P.O. Varghese, Philip and Joseph Mathew spoke and inspired the local workers.

On the 18th, the two Bishops and others drove to Raigonda in the Jangedu Pastorate and dedicated and opened the New Life Centre. At this inauguration function organised by the Rev. K. J. Samuel, there were village officials and the Headmaster of the local school and they felicitated the visitors and appreciated the missionary work.

On arrival at Jangedu (a backward rural area with a Mission House), there was a service of Holy Baptism at which the Missionary's son was Christened by Bishop Solomon. Readers from the M. K. Diocese will rejoice to hear that a Christian Medical Centre made possible by the support of the Christ Church in Trivandrum and the C.S.I. Church at Kodukulanji was inaugurated by the Bishops. This Homoeopathic Medical Centre is intended to serve the needs of the people of this area where no other facilities exist. Dr. Sunny Jacob D.H.M.S. is in-charge of this Centre assisted by the Presbyter's wife Mrs. Aleyamma Samuel. At the end of a busy day Bishop Solomon left for Hanamkonda where a Farewell was presented to him by the representatives of the Warangal G. C. C. soon after which he presided over the last public meeting at which Mr. Paul Sudhakar of Trivandrum gave his final address in a series of five open-air Lectures on 'The Geetha and the Gospel' organised by the Tri-Cities' Pastors' Association. Our thanks are due to the South Kerala Diocese for having produced a man of God like Paul Sudhakar whose ministry was greatly appreciated by the Hindu intelligentsia.

The M.K. Diocese delegation drove back to Parkal in the evening and then to Mogallapalli, the residence of the Rev. P. O. Ninan, Missionary, sent out by the Andhra Mission organised by the Youth of the M.K. Diocese. The delegates attended the night prayers and on Sunday the 19th took part in the Divine-worship at which Bishop Joseph confirmed 18 candidates and blessed the work of the Missionaries there doing both evangelistic and medical work in the area. The delegation departed after lunch to Kerala by different routes. We praise God for the active support of His people in the M.K. Diocese and thank its representatives for their warm fellowship and ministry in our midst and Bishop Solomon, the Diocesan Officials and others for their participation in our activities.

B. PRABHUDASS.

Kazipet,  
30-11-1978.



# Book Review

## BALANCED CHRISTIANITY

John R. W. Stott Hodder and Stoughton

Price Rs.6.55. Pages 48

Among the many disruptions, the Church is split today, predominantly on doctrinal positions. John R. Stott, rector of All Souls West End London, in his essay-type booklet 'Balanced Christianity', has dealt with this subject with a wide catholicity of view and sound understanding.

Dividing his argument into four sub-titles, he comes out with force with a call to avoid unnecessary polarisation, that is, to refrain from holding extreme views. In 'Intellect and Emotion' he discusses the seriousness of the danger of creating an effectless society, to quote Pamela Hansford Johnson, '....in which nobody cares for anyone but himself, or for anything but instant self-gratification'.—Very searching words indeed, especially when the tide is towards identity and acceptance everywhere.

On the other hand, emotion unrestrained is wrongly termed as charismatic experience in worship, among certain groups, thus making one wonder whether there is any grey matter at all, says Stott. They forget that God has created us as rational beings, with a mind equipped for use!

Under 'Conservative and Radical' he explains a few misunderstood terms. By *conservative* he means 'to be a faithful guardian of the one and only eternal

gospel. For, the self-revelation of God has reached its completion, in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the apostolic witness to Christ, preserved in the New Testament.' According to Stott, *radical* does not refer to the unbridled rebel, but one who discerns Scripture and Culture in their respective mobility, finding not ideal solutions, but practical approaches to problems, away from the danger of being an inconoclast.

In 'Form and Freedom' we come into an area of healthy comparison. Forms of worship are discussed. Controversy between young and old, between structural forms with their liturgy, majesty and occasional stiffness and modern meetings with their spontaneous, exuberant worship that sometimes lacks reverence, show the transition today in Church worship. Both have their plus points, the local church and the church universal, though separated by time and space are identical in spirit and in the Lord.

We now come to the last part of the book, *Evangelism and Social action*, which deals with the tug of conflict in the church today and with the church's extreme view of the former, which ignores the total man. Social action stresses action more and loses grasp of the great commission, the church is primarily called to proclaim over roof tops. The church is obsessed either with micro-ethics or macro-ethics, forgetting that the obligation is to both. Reading the book brings an awareness of how even our own registrations and polarisations sometimes hinder a genuine spirit of fellowship for any common cause the Church is called to champion today.

PRINCE JESUDHASON



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Pastors, lay persons and youth are invited to apply for this Institute. Only those who have *Never Attended* any of Dr. Haqq's former Institutes should apply as others desiring this opportunity will be considered. All sessions will be in English. Those not understanding or speaking English *should not apply*.

Each delegate must be able to meet at least 30% of his own travel to the Institute both ways. Food and lodging will be provided during the week at Kodaikanal.

Please send for an application blank to Prof. E.W.P. Thomas, 'Ernhil', Prof. Thomas Street, Tiruchirappalli-620 020 (T.N.). Final date for receiving back the applications after filling in will be 15th March 1979. Only 150 delegates will be selected by Dr. Haqq. Please be prompt in asking for the applications and returning them in good time. First come, first served.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Rt. Rev. Subramaniam Joseph Samuel, aged 76 years, who retired as Bishop in Coimbatore, on 1st February 1972, died in Madras on 30th January 1979. The funeral took place on 31st January 1979 at the St. George's Cathedral, Madras.



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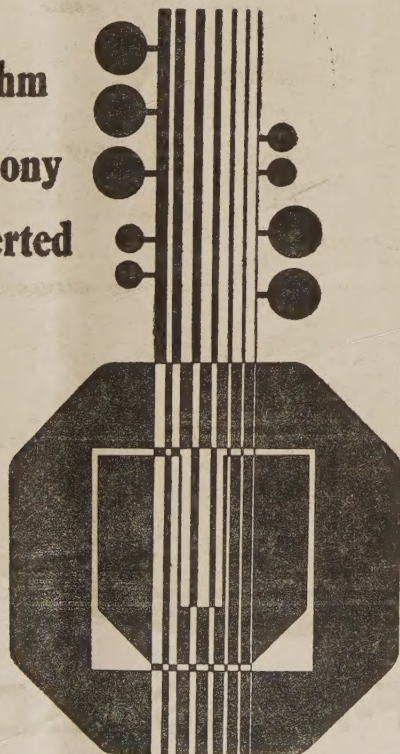
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